

National 4-H Recognition Model

Preface

4-H is a voluntary, non-formal education program. The purpose of 4-H is to assist youth in realizing their potential and to help them develop a positive image of themselves. In the broadest sense, 4-H is a human development program designed to foster a sense of confidence, a feeling of accomplishment, and a heightened level of competence. The careful, creative, balanced use of recognition is an element of successful programs.

Youth Development Education

4-H Youth Development Education programs create supportive environments for youth and adults from diverse backgrounds and with diverse experience, to reach their fullest potential. Learning occurs through a range of youth and/or adult-initiated and adult-supported experiences that enable youth to acquire knowledge, develop life skills and strengthen values.

In 4-H Youth Development Education, youth and adults are provided opportunities to develop their unique talents and capabilities. The basis of 4-H is "Learning by Doing." 4-H provides opportunities for both training (learning) and practice (doing). Through this process, young people develop life skills that are relevant now and in the future. Youth who develop life skills become self-directed, productive, contributing citizens.

Life skills involve learning specific information for completing a task and understanding how to apply the basic principles or techniques learned to other situations. Some coping, competency, contributory life skills developed in 4-H are:

- Understanding of self
- Relating with others (interpersonal)
- Communication skills Problem solving
- Acquiring, analyzing, using information
- Managing of resources
- Working with others (in groups)

Recognition: Our Vision and Mission

Recognition is an acknowledgment and affirmation of the personal growth in an individual. It can be public or private. It can be within the individual or provided by others. Recognition in 4-H is the encouragement and support for learning. It comes as a result of participation in educational experiences.

4-H uses recognition as one strategy to help youth become more capable and competent. It does this through recognizing and appreciating each person's effort and providing positive reinforcement to continue participating in learning activities. 4-H'ers experiences must be structured so as to incorporate opportunities to build positive esteem and self-reliance.

Recognition is a significant incentive to further learning. Recognition properly used can inspire young people to continue participating and learning. If properly designed and

used, it will match the needs of young people. Young people become active in 4-H because they benefit personally, not because it is a good program. They make choices depending on their need for security, new experiences, response or recognition.

Recognition must be continually revised to meet the needs of individual participants. Individual progress must be recognized and individual enthusiasm must be encouraged. There is no one way of encouraging and supporting young people. They come from varied backgrounds and with different experiences. They vary in their interests, values, needs, attitudes and aspirations.

For some youth intrinsic, or internal, recognition is far more powerful than any extrinsic, or external, recognition. Motivation is determined by a complex blend of environment, attitude, and self-concept. It is what energizes a person and directs individual activity. The national model for recognition provides for a balanced approach. It encourages a variety of forms of recognition to meet the diverse needs and interests of today's youth.

Recognition in 4-H has several purposes:

- Recognition can be a motivator for some young people to excel and take risks.
- Recognition can foster self-appraisal skills, providing a strong foundation for each young person to engage in self-reflection and self-praise without the need for external rewards.
- Recognition can encourage and support the efforts of young people as they engage in individualized learning, peer competition or cooperation.
- Recognition, used in all its forms, can provide balance to the recognition young people receive as they move through our educational programs to increasingly difficult challenges.

Our goal is self-directed learners.

Beliefs About Recognition

The Recognition Model is a dynamic model for planning, implementing, and developing 4-H programs. Several beliefs underlie the principles of the model:

- Recognition is a basic human need with security, new experiences and responses.
- Recognition should be a part of all 4-H learning experiences.
- Appropriate recognition takes many forms.
- Respect for individual differences is essential.
- Recognition must be structured to build positive self-esteem.
- Opportunities for self-assessment and reflection allow youth to learn.
- A range of opportunities and challenges provide choices to meet individual needs.
- Adult support is essential in youth learning and recognition.
- Everyone should be recognized at some level.
- A balance between all elements of the model is essential.

National 4-H Recognition Model

The National 4-H Recognition Model includes five types of recognition. It is important for adults who work with 4-H'ers to provide appropriate recognition to all participants.

- Recognition of 4-H'ers for participation in educational experiences acknowledges involvement as a first step in building a positive self concept.
- Recognition of progress toward personal goals enables youth to gain experience in goal-setting and realistic self-assessment.
- Recognition of the achievement of generally recognized standards of excellence gives youth an external, pre-determined target for their learning experiences.
- Recognition through peer competition is a strong motivation for some but not all young people. It is not appropriate for youth under age eight.
- Recognition for cooperation helps youth learn and work cooperatively, preparing them for living in today's inter-dependent, global society.

Applying The Model

The purpose of recognition is to encourage and support the efforts of young people in learning to improve their knowledge and develop their life skills. Using a comprehensive recognition program we can create a broad array of experiential learning environments. They must respect the diversity of individuals and teams as related to the form of recognition that is most effective in encouraging and supporting their development. 4-H leaders can provide a climate that helps young people develop their capabilities. Each of us is born with the potential to become the best person that we can be.

The Recognition Model is a part of a comprehensive plan which rewards positive learning behaviors in youth. In all aspects of the model, recognition should be based on the youth's involvement, participation and/or efforts. Recognition should be designed to meet the needs, interests and aspirations of young people from different backgrounds and with different experiences. It should be focused on individual learning. It should not be influenced by factors such as: monetary (dollars) resources to purchase high-quality project materials, top-grade animals and use of equipment.

Recognition received from one part of the model may provide the appropriate degree of challenge to move a young person into a different part of the model. Moving from one part of the model to another broadens their experiences, modifying opportunities for learning and raising esteem through other types of recognition.

Participation

This type of recognition program emphasizes the importance of acknowledging young people who have been involved in 4-H educational experiences. For some youth, participation in a 4-H learning experience is an accomplishment.

Progress Toward Self-Set Goals

Parents and other adults can help youth set realistic goals. Recognition for progress toward self-set goals, no matter how small, is an integral part of this type of recognition.

Achievement of Standards of Excellence

Standards of excellence are established by experts in a given area. By measuring personal progress against standards of excellence, youth can gain insight into their own efforts and abilities.

Peer Competition

Peer competition is a part of the model for recognition. This type of recognition subjectively identifies, in a concrete time and place, the best team or individual. It is a strong motivator for some youth but is inappropriate for youth under age eight.

Cooperation

Learning and working together promotes high achievement. Cooperation may take advantage of all the skills represented in the group, as well as the process by which the group approaches the learning task/goal. Everyone is rewarded.

The Recognition Model can be used to design a recognition system to meet the needs of all youth. Designing a recognition system involves:

- Looking at the young people: their needs, interests, attitudes and aspirations.
- Understanding differences between people based on background and experiences; difference in behavior in some person; differences between similar types of people.
- Using recognition that encourages and supports learning, and satisfies intrinsic and extrinsic needs. It has to balance recognition for participation, progress toward self set goals, achievement of standards of excellence, competition and cooperation.

This Recognition Model is appropriate and useful at all levels of 4-H. Recognition committees and councils at the local, county, state, and national levels utilize this approach in all recognition programs. Using a comprehensive, recognition program can lead to more youth being recognized and can provide a way to say to every youth: "You are a valued and important member of the 4-H program."

National 4-H Recognition Model

For: Individuals & Groups, Youth, Adults, Families, & Partners

Recognition, support, and encouragement for learning is provided equally in all five areas. Cooperation partly overlaps Participation, Progress toward self set Goals, Standards of Excellence and Peer competition. Cooperation is a part of all four. The intent of the graphic is to show that recognition is given to individuals and people working together in teams or groups.

